



OCCA
The Oxford Centre for
Christian Apologetics

Frequently Asked Questions and other Practical Details

General Conference Information

Q – Are there any age limitations to attend OCCA Summer conference?

A – We are not able to accept reservations from anyone under the age of 18 years old.

Q – What is your refund/cancelation policy?

A – If you are unable to attend the event then please notify us as soon as possible as we shall endeavour to resell your place. Refunds will be issued, less a processing fee, up to 1 month before the event. If you need to cancel within 1 month of the event, we will issue a refund (less processing fee) *only* if we are able to resell the vacancy.

Q – When should I arrive?

A – While the conference officially begins on Monday 10 July at 8:30 am, we invite you to join us on Sunday 9 July at 17:00, at the TS Eliot theatre at Merton college, for registration and a welcome address where you will hear what to expect for the week to come. This will be followed by a welcome dinner.

Q – When does the conference end?

A – The last session is on Friday 14 July, finishing at 12:30 p.m.

Entering and staying in the UK

Q – Do I need a passport to get into U.K?

A – Yes, if you are travelling to the Summer Conference from any country outside the U.K. you must have a valid passport to enter the country. If you do not already have a passport, we strongly recommend that you start the application process well before your planned trip.

For information about which nationalities require visas please visit <https://www.gov.uk/browse/visas-immigration>

Q – What are the COVID-19 related restrictions when entering the UK?

A – Currently, you do not need to take any COVID-19 tests, or fill in a passenger locator form, whether vaccinated or not. However, we strongly suggest checking <https://www.gov.uk/uk-border-control> before making travel arrangements.

Q – What is the weather like in the U.K. during July?

A – Very unpredictable! It is the middle of summer and average temperatures tend to be in the region of 20-25 degrees Celsius (68-80 degrees Fahrenheit). Showery weather is fairly common so we would advise bringing a waterproof jacket and shoes suitable for wet weather.

Q – What is the currency in the U.K.?

A – In the U.K. the currency is pound sterling (£). Unless you are in the airport, you will not be able to use other currencies. However, you can change your money at the airport or at certain banks in Oxford during business hours. Most shops will accept all major credit and debit cards, although some will not accept American Express.

Q – Where can I find more information about Oxford?

A – An excellent general website on Oxford can be found at www.oxfordcity.co.uk
There is an Oxford City Tourist Information Centre which can be found at 15-16 Broad Street, Oxford, OX1 3AS. Telephone: +44 (0) 1865 241133

Dress Code

Q – Is there a dress code for the week?

A – There is no strict dress code during the days. As British weather is very changeable we would recommend you bring clothes suitable for all weather conditions. In particular, we would suggest you bring a waterproof jacket and/or umbrella, and a pair of comfortable walking shoes (the best way to get around Oxford is on foot). It is a 5 minute walk from the entrance of the College to our conference room and to the dining hall, so we recommend that you bear this in mind when choosing clothing.

Meals

Refreshments will be provided between morning and afternoon sessions. Lunch will be served in Merton College Dining Hall. Dinner and Breakfast will not be provided. (Breakfast is provided if you book your accommodation at Merton College) There are many wonderful restaurants and cafes in Oxford, all walking distance from Merton College.

Q – Where will lunch be held?

A – Refreshments of tea, coffee and light snacks will be served in-between sessions. Lunch is a set menu and will be served in Merton College dining hall promptly at the designated times. Some lunches may be held outside, however, this depends on weather.

Q – What if I have special dietary requirements?

A – Special dietary requirements can be catered for if, and only if, we are informed in advance. Please make sure you include any relevant details in an email to events@theoCCA.org

Q – Is it ok to skip a meal if I want to eat out at a restaurant on a particular lunchtime/evening?

A – Lunch is a great opportunity to meet others and have conversation. However, if you would like to make your own lunch arrangements, please ensure you sign out using the sheet provided at the registration desk. This means that a member of staff can take your place at the meal (as we have a set number of places at each meal) and the food won't go to waste. There is no financial reimbursement for delegates who decide to miss a meal.

Programme & Lecture Sessions

Q – Where will the lectures be held?

A – All lectures will be held in the TS Eliot Theatre at Merton College.

Q – Is there a photo and a recording policy?

A – ***We request that you do not record the sessions yourself, whether on video or audio.***

There is no policy on photography, however we ask that participants are sensitive in the teaching sessions and limit photo taking at these times. The OCCA will be recording the talks for future use.

Q – Is there childcare available during the sessions?

A – Unfortunately, we are not able to provide any childcare at all during the week.

Q – Do I have to be at a certain academic standard to be able to attend the OCCA Summer Conference?

A – No, anyone is welcome to attend, as long as they are at least 18 years old. The programme is intended to be suitable for anyone who is interested in the subject material.

Q – Can I gain credit for an academic course by attending the OCCA Summer Conference?

A – No. Whilst some of the speakers at the OCCA Summer Conference do lecture at universities, the conference itself is not accredited by any academic institution.

Q – Can I plug my laptop or tablet into an electricity supply during the talks?

A – No, the lecture room does not have easily accessible plug sockets and, therefore, if you wish to take notes with your laptop/tablet please charge the battery prior to attending the lectures.

Transport Details

We recommend flying to London Heathrow or London Gatwick airports (in normal road conditions London Heathrow is about 60-75 minutes from Oxford, whereas Gatwick is around 100-150 minutes away). Transfer from the other London airports (Stansted Airport, Luton Airport, and London City Airport) is more complicated. You will need to arrange your own transport from the airport to Oxford.

Location:

Merton College Oxford
Merton St, Oxford OX1 4JD

From London Heathrow Airport to Oxford

By Car

Journey time: approximately 55 minutes (depending on traffic)

Journey Distance: 45 miles (75 kilometers)

Please note there is no parking available at Merton College

By Bus

Total journey time from Heathrow to Oxford: approximately 1hrs 30minutes

The **Oxford Bus Company** operates a direct bus service between Heathrow Airport and Oxford which stops just a 4 minute walk away from Merton College. We recommend getting off at Oxford High Street.

Website: <https://airline.oxfordbus.co.uk/>

Telephone: +44 (0)1865 785400

Please double check all transport details yourself as this information may change by the time you travel

From London Gatwick to Oxford

By Car

Journey time: approximately **1h30** (depending on traffic)

Journey Distance: 85 miles (135 kilometers)

Please note there is no parking available at Merton College

By Bus

Total journey time from Gatwick to Oxford: approximately 2hrs 15minutes

The **Oxford Bus Company** operates a direct bus service between Gatwick Airport and Oxford which stops just a 4 minute walk away from Merton College. We recommend getting off at Oxford High Street.

Website: <https://airline.oxfordbus.co.uk/>

Telephone: +44 (0)1865 785400

Please double check all transport details yourself as the above information may change by the time you travel

How to get to Oxford from London city centre

By Rail

If you are travelling from London **city centre**, as opposed to the airports, we recommend that you get the train from Paddington station to Oxford. There are two types of train that travel to Oxford and each departs around every half an hour. The faster train only stops at Reading en route and is quicker (just under 1 hour). The slower train stops at many of the smaller stations en route (Reading, Goring, Radley, etc) and takes around 90 minutes. Please speak to the ticket office to ensure you get on the right train.

Train timetable information can be found at <https://www.nationalrail.co.uk/>

Telephone: +44 (0)**3457 48 49 50**

By Bus

An alternative to the train is the bus from Victoria Coach Station in London to Gloucester Green in Oxford (pronounced Gloster). These leave every 20 minutes and the journey takes approximately 1hr 40 minutes.

For more information visit <https://www.oxfordtube.com>

Local transport in Oxford

By bus

Oxford is very well served by local bus routes. The following website is very good and gives details of routes, fares and timetables - <http://city.oxfordbus.co.uk/smartzone/>. We also recommend downloading the SmartZone map, found on the web page above, to give a clear guide of which buses serve each area of the city. Busses take contactless payment.

By taxi

There are a very large number of local taxi companies servicing Oxford. Please ensure that you only use licensed taxis as opposed to unmarked private cars. You can hail a taxi from most areas in the city centre, and your hotel/B&B will be able to call one for you if you are travelling from your accommodation into the city.

Rideshare Apps (Uber/Bolt/etc..)

Rideshares are not available in Oxford. If you book a ride through a rideshare app such as Uber, bolt, freenow, etc. it will connect you with the local taxi companies. However you will pay more if booked through one of these apps. It is best to book direct with a taxi company, or get a taxi from the stand at the train station.

Accommodation

The OCCA Summer Conference does not provide accommodation. Our venue, Merton College, does have limited student style rooms available. For your convenience, we recommend staying at the College, if possible. If you wish to stay at Merton College please use <https://www.merton.ox.ac.uk/conferences/bedrooms> to book your room. **Important:** use event code **OCCA2023**. Alternatively, please make your own arrangements for accommodation. A list of some accommodations suggestions is included at the end of this document.

Q – What accommodation is available at Merton College?

A – There are limited number of student-style rooms available at Merton College. There are 3 options of rooms:

Single standard - £80/night. A single bed and a washroom shared with one other room.

Single ensuite - £100/night. A single bed and private ensuite.

Double ensuite - £145/night. Two single beds and private ensuite.

All prices are per night and include breakfast provided by the college. You will also be charged a £10 booking fee. If you wish to book one of these rooms, use the following link with event code **OCCA2023**:

<https://www.merton.ox.ac.uk/conferences/bedrooms>

Q – I would like to extend my stay in Oxford after the Summer Conference has finished. Can I stay at Merton College?

A – Rooms are available Sunday, July 8th through Thursday night. With final check out Friday morning, July 14th at 10:00 am.

There is no possibility to extend the stay leading up to or following the OCCA Summer Conference at Merton College. If you would like to arrive in Oxford earlier than Sunday or stay past Friday, please make your own alternative arrangements for accommodation for those nights.

Q – Are there any age restrictions? Can my baby/children stay in my room?

A – We are not able to accept reservations for anyone under the age of 18 years old due to policy at Merton College. Therefore, anyone under 18 is not allowed to stay in the college rooms or attend any aspect of the Summer Conference.

Q – What will the bedrooms be like?

A – Accommodation in college in this historic setting enables you to be in the heart of Oxford. Merton College offers student style bedrooms. Accommodation is split between the different quads and the rooms offer beautiful views across the college and grounds. The bedrooms are comfortable, clean and equipped with some essentials. However, please bear in mind that they are student rooms, not hotel rooms. Linen, towels and tea and coffee making facilities are provided as standard. You will receive a welcome pack on arrival that will contain shampoo/soap etc. however this will not be replenished during the week. Wi-Fi is available throughout the college, although the signal strength may vary depending on whereabouts in the college you are. Please note that if you require a hairdryer, you will need to bring this with you (along with the necessary voltage adapter for the U.K).

Q – Is there air conditioning?

A – There is no air conditioning in the Dining Hall or bedrooms. Many of the bedrooms are equipped with fans.

Q – Will there be telephone access in the bedroom?

A – The bedrooms do not have telephones.

Q – Is there internet access at Merton College?

A – Yes, the college is equipped with Wi-Fi. You will be issued with log in details on arrival.

Q – Will I need an electrical adapter and what size?

A – If travelling from outside the U.K. you will need a 3-pronged voltage adapter for ALL electrical appliances. It is very important to note that the electricity supply in England is different (higher voltage) to that of many countries. ***You must make sure that the adapter you buy is able to convert from the British 240 volts down to that of your appliance.*** Please be aware that if your adapter is not capable of **converting** voltages then this can cause fire and/or destroy your equipment. **This is particularly important to note if you intend to use hairdryers, heated hair appliances or kettles.**

Q – Will there be room service in the Merton Accommodation?

A – There is no room service available as it is an Oxford University College, rather than a hotel.

Q – Will there be access to a refrigerator, microwave, etc?

A – There are no refrigerators, microwaves or other cooking facilities available to delegates at Merton.

Q – Is there a gym or pool that can be used at Merton College?

A – There is no gym or pool facilities onsite at Merton

Q – Is there somewhere on campus to wash clothes?

A – If you do need to do any laundry while staying at Merton, there are washing machines and dryers onsite. Delegates are required to bring their own laundry detergent and cards can be purchased from the lodge with a value of £3.00 or £6.00 (with a wash and a dry cycle costing £1.50 each).

Q – What is the emergency contact number on campus? What hours will this phone/desk be available?

A – The lodge is manned 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, and can be contacted on +44 (0)1865 276310.

Q – What time is check-out at Merton?

A – Check-out time is 10:00 a.m. on Friday, July 14th at the latest. We suggest checking out of your room before attending the morning conference session on Friday at 09:00.

Q – Will there be someone to help me with my luggage when I arrive at my accommodation?

A – If you have booked accommodation at Merton College, there will be staff available to greet you at who can assist you with luggage and any questions you may have. If you have booked accommodation elsewhere, then it is very likely that there will be hotel staff on hand to assist you with your luggage.

Alternative accommodation in Oxford

Cotswold Lodge Hotel

<http://www.cotswoldlodgehotel.co.uk> 20 minute walk/5 minute bus to city centre.

Oxford University

College rooms - The University will often rent out rooms in the many city centre colleges during the summer months. They vary in price and standard but you can search <https://www.universityrooms.com/en-GB/city/oxford/home> to find out what is available for the dates of your stay.

Best Western Linton Lodge

<https://www.bestwestern.co.uk/hotels/best-western-plus-linton-lodge-hotel-83647>

30 minute walk/10 minute bus to city centre

The Buttery

<http://www.thebutteryhotel.co.uk> Very central location, 5-10 minute walk to Merton College

The Galaxie Hotel

<https://www.galaxie.co.uk> 30 minute walk/10-15 minute bus to city centre

Old Parsonage Hotel

<http://www.oldparsonage-hotel.co.uk> 10 minute walk to city centre

Malmaison Oxford

<https://www.malmaison.com/locations/oxford> 5-10 minute walk to Merton College

The Bocardo Hotel

<http://www.thebocardo.co.uk> 5 minute walk to city centre, 10 minute walk to Merton College

Mercure Oxford Eastgate Hotel

<http://www.mercure.com/gb/hotel-6668-mercure-oxfordeastgate-hotel>

2 minute walk to Merton College, 5-10 minute walk to city centre

Remont Oxford

<http://www.remont-oxford.co.uk> 45 minute walk/15 minute bus to city centre

The Tower House

<https://www.towerhouseoxford.co.uk/>

5 minute walk to city centre, 10 minute walk to Merton College

This is just a very small selection of the accommodation on offer in and around the city of Oxford. Many other alternatives can be found by using sites such as www.booking.com, www.laterooms.com, www.tripadvisor.co.uk and www.trivago.co.uk.